THE PRESBYTERIALL GOVERNMENT EXAMINED.

VVherein the weakneſſe of their grounds are unfolded: alſo their pretended prooſes diſproved; And the liberty of the People in chuſing of their owne Officers: proved out of the word of GOD.

Whereunto is annexed certaine Arguments and Reaſons, proving the foreſayd *Preſbyteriall Government* to be contrary to the Patterne that our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* hath left us in the New *Teſtament*.

All which we humbly preſent to the Kings moſt Excellent Majeſty: The right Honourable Lords, and the Honourable Houſe of Commons, now Aſſembled in PARLIAMENT.

Act. 1. 16.

And he was by a common conſent counted with the Eleaven Apoſtles.

Act. 14. 23.

And when they had ordained them Elders by Election in every Church, and prayed and faſted, they commended them to the LORD in whom they believed.

Printed *Anno Dom.* 1641.

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All which we humbly present to the King's most Excellent Majesty: The right Honourable Lords, and the Honourable [illegible] Commons, now Assembled in PARLIAMENT.

[illegible] Elizabeth Aylsie.

[illegible] LORD, [illegible]

Price [illegible] 1642.

OF THE ECCLESIASTICALL PRESBYTERIE.

WE do so acknowledg, and approve of, as divinely instituted, the Presbyteries of the particular *Churches*, as with all we judge them sundrie waies defective. As first we require that all received into the colledg, and company of Elders, even those which are called *governers*, should be *apt to teach*, and *able to exhort with sound doctrine, and convince gainesayers*, and that not onely privately, or in the Consistorie, but in the publick assemblie also, as the nature of their publick office requireth. I am not ignorant, what that learned man *Gersom Bucer* in his late treatise hath published about this matter, neither do I unwillingly assent thereunto: provided onely, that what he requires in those Elders, that they be able to performe publiquely, and in the

1 Tim. 3. 2. Tit. 1. 5, 7, 9.

Gersom Buc. disput. of Church government. p. 32, 33, 44.

Church assembly, if not exactly, yet competently.

A second defect, which we wish supplyed is, that of annuall, or triennial or temporarie, they might be perpetuall, and for life, (except by some casualtie, or occurrence they be disabled) as the pastours themselves. This terme of yeares for the Elders administration in the Reformed Churches, the forenamed author in the same place doth not so much defend, as excuse; but it seemeth rather needfull to have it reformed (which is also the desire of the said learned man) and that for these reasons.

Pag 34. 35. 36.

1. The Apostle Paul *calling unto him the Elders of the Church of Ephesus to Miletum*, doth pronounce of them all, as well the governors, as those that laboured in the word, that they were *made Bishops* or overseers *of the* same *Church, by the holy Ghost*. Now the authority of that the appointer ought to work in the appointed great conscience, not lightly to relinquish that charge, which by the disposition of the holy Ghost they had taken upon them.

Act. 20, 17, 28.

2. The same Apostle doth in the same place admonish, and exhort the same Elders that they should *take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock*, lest the same, *after his departure* should unhappily be damnified, either by *Wolves entering in among them*, or such as should *rise up from themselves speaking perverse things*. Now if the date of their Eldership, and charge were shortly to be out, they might

ver. 28, 29, 30, 31.

might well thinke with themselves, that the Apostles admonition for after times did not much concern them, whose term of office should so shortly be expired, and were perhaps to follow the Apostles departure at the heeles.

3. It was sacrilege for the Levites being consecrated to the Lord, for the service of the Tabernacle and Temple, to retire from the office undertaken by them, although (age growing upon them) they were exempted from some the more laborious workes of that ministration: How then is it lawfull for the Elders, or Deacons (being no more at their owne disposing, but as the Levites of old, the Lords sacred and consecrated ones) to withdraw so lightly from his speciall service? No man under the Law might *change a Beast*, if cleane, no not *a better for a worse*, once hallowed to the Lord. How much lesse may the Church then discharge her officers (or they themselves) ministring faithfully, and as they ought?

Num 8.

Levi. 17, 9, 10.

Lastly, the Apostle Paul instructing the Church in Timothy to *keep the commandement* of Christ *unrebukeable* untill that his glorious appearing, doth not permit, no not to the Widowes and Deaconesses to relinquish the Office once taken upon them: unto whom for that very cause he forbids mariage it selfe, otherwise permitted to all, and to some injoyned. How much lesse lawfull is it for the Elders, or Deacons of the Church (whose both condition, and

1 *Tim.* 5, 21, *and* 6, 14. 1 *Corin.* 14, 37. 1 *Tim.* 5. 11, 12.

ministerie is far more excellent) for so light an causes, to look back, and relinquish their vocation, wherein *Christ* hath in such sort placed them?

A third thing there is, and that of most moment, viz. that the Elders doe not administer their publique Office publiquely, as they should, but onely in their private consistory. And first, the administration of every Office doth in right follow the nature of the same; whether domesticall in the familie, or civill in the common-wealth, or spirituall in the Church: the Elders Office then being publique, requires answerable, and publique administration. Not that it is unlawfull for the Elders to convene, and meet apart from the bodie, and to deliberate of such things as concernes the same, and so to do sundry things by vertue of their Office, but because that is not sufficient, neither do they indeed *fulfill* their publique, and Church-*Office, which in the Lord they have received*, except as privately, and in their Consistory, so also, (and especially) publiquely, and in the face of the congregation they execute the same.

Coloss. 4. 17.

2. The Apostle *beseecheth* them of Thessalonica *that they would in love highly esteeme for their works sake*, not onely *them which laboured among them*, to wit, *in Doctrine*; but them also, which were *over them in the Lord, and admonished them*. But of the work of their Elders which govern, the Reformed Churches must needs be ignorant;

1 Thes. 5. 12, 13.

1 Tim. 5. 17.

neither doe, or can they know, whether they be good, or bad. Their pastours they do prosecute with due love, and honour, out of their own certaine knowledg of them and their work, but their Elders onely by hear-say.

Lastly, the same Apostle warneth *the Elders of Ephesus*, that they *attend and take heed to the whole flock, in which they were made Bishops*. But it cannot be, that he should ministerially, as he ought, feed the whole Church, whose voice the greatest part thereof never so much as once heareth. To lead, or receive a sheep now and then into the sheepfould, to confirm one that is weak, or correct one that strayeth, and that apart from the flock, is in no wise to feed the whole flock, as the Apostle requireth. Act. 20 17, 28

And that this point may be made the more plain, let us descend unto some such particulars, as in which the Elders Office seemeth specially to consist. And they are, the admitting of members into the Church, upon profession of faith made, and the reproving and censuring of obstinate offenders, whether sining publikely, or privately with scandal. As we willingly leave the execution, and administration of these things to the Elders alone in the setled, and well ordered state of the Church, so do we deny plainely, that they are, or can be rightly and orderly done, but with the peoples privitie and consent.

For the first, *Christ* the *Lord* gave in charge to his Apostles to preach in his name remission

of sinnes, and therewith life eternall: and that such Jewes, or Gentiles, as should believe, and repent, *viz.* professe holily faith and repentance, (for to judge of the heart is *Gods* prerogative) they should receive into the fellowship of the Church, and baptize. And that these al, and every of them were publiquely, and in the face of the Congregation to be administred, the *Acts of the Apostles* do plenteously make knowne. And if Baptisme, the consequent of the confession of faith in them baptized, and the badg of our consociation with *Christ* and his Church, be to be celebrated publiquely, why is not the profession of *faith* proportionably (although by the formerly baptized through a kinde of unorderly anticipation) to be made publikely also, and therewithal the consociation Ecclesiasticall, as the former? The covenant privately made, and the seal publiquely annexed are disproportionate.

I further add, that since persons admitted into the Church, are by the whole bodie, if not of enemies, at least of strangers become, and are to be reputed brethren in *Christ* most nearly joyned, and they with whom, they are to call upon one common Father publiquely to *participate* of *one* holy *bread*, and with whom, they are to have *all things*, even bodily goods after a sort *common*, as everie *one hath need*, it seemeth most equall, that not onely the Presbyters (the Churches servants under *Christ*) but the whole commonaltie also should take knowledge in their

1 Cor. 10, 17.

Act. 2, 44, 45.

persons

persons, both of their holy profession of faith, and voluntary submission made as unto *Christ* himself, so to his most holy institutions in his Church.

To come to the second head. And 1. *those who sin*, that is, with publique scandall, *rebuke publiquely*, sayth the Apostle, *that others also may fear.* 1 Tim. 5, 20. And if the Elders themselves, of whom he speaketh, for whose credit the greatest care is to be taken, *much more any other*, as Beza rightly observeth. And that not for this cause alone, that when the punishment comes to one, the feare might reach unto many, which yet wise men in all publique executions would have carefully provided for, but also that both he that so sinneth may be the more ashamed, and others both within, and without may withall take knowledg, how little indulgent the Church is to her own dearest ones in their enormous sinnes. Beza in ann. on the place.

2. With this also it well consorteth, that *Christ* the onely Doctor of his Church would have not onely sinnes scandalous committed in publique, publiquely reproved, and before the multitude, but even those which are private, obstinately persisted in, when he saith, *Tell the Church &c.* Matth. 18, 15, 16, 17.

I am not ignorant how diversly divers men do interpret these words: whilst some by the Church do understand the civill court of the Magistrate; others the Hierachicall Bishop, with his Officials; others the senat of Elders exclud-

ing the people. And thus whilst these strive for the power, and name withall of the Church amongst themselves, the Church indeed, and which *Christ* the *Lord* meaneth, is well nigh stripped both of power, and name.

Beza, Zanchius, Parker, G. Bucer &c.

The first of these three interpretations I will not trouble my selfe with, as being almost of all, and that worthily exploded, and rejected; and abundantly refuted by divers learned men: the two latter are to be assaulted with almost the same weapons.

The former of these two, though it be in it selfe the more different from *Christs* meaning, yet comes it in this circumstance now in consideration, the nearer the truth in our judgment, considered in its execution: since neither the Bishops, nor their Officialls, Chauncellours, Commissaries, or other Court-keepers do exclude the people from their consistories, and Courts: but to offer themselves in their publique judgments, and censures to the view of all, who please to be present thereat. And I thinke it a course unheard of, either amongst Gentiles or Jewes, or Christians (be it spoken without offence) before this last age, that publique judgments, and other acts of publique nature, as these are, should be privately exercised, and without the peoples privitie. It was not so in Israel of old, where by Gods appointment the Elders were to sit, and judge in the gates of the Citie: nor in the Synagogues themselves, from which many

many are of mind, how truely I will not say, that the Christian Eldership was derived, after the Roman tyrannie had confined into them the Jewes civill conventions, and judgments; nor in the Primitive Church, no not in some ages after the Apostles, as might easily be proved out of Tertullian, Cyprian, and others, if I would trie the matter in that Court: but *it is much more safe*, as *Austin* saith, *to walke by the divine Scriptures*. *August. of Christ. doct. lib. 3.*

And first the word ἐκκλησία Church, originally Greek, answering to the Hebrew קהל doth primarily, and properly, signifie a convention of Citizens called from their houses by the publique Cryer, either to heare some publique sentence or charge given: but translated to Religious use, denoteth an assembly of persons called out of the state of corrupt nature into that of supernaturall grace, by the publishing of the Gospel. Now the Elders, or Presbyters (as such) are, and so are sayd to be, called, to wit, to their office of Eldership, but called out they are not, being themselves to call out the Church, and unto it to performe the cryers office. Neither do I thinke that the name *Ecclesia* Church, hath been used by any Greek Author, before the Apostles times, or in their dayes, or in the age after them, for the assemblie of sole governors in the act of their government, or indeed before the same governors had seized into their own, and onely hands, the Churches both name and power.

But

But you will say, as learned men use to do that these Elders sustaine the person of the whole multitude, and supply their roome, for the avoyding of confusion; and so are rightly, as commonly called, *The Church representative.*

I answere. First, no godly, no nor reasonable man will affirm, that this representation is to be extended to all the acts of Religion, or indeed to others, then these, which are exercised in the governing of the Church. What is it then? The Elders in ruling, and governing the CHURCH must represent the people, and occupie their place. It should seeme then, that it appertaines unto the people, unto the people primarily, and ORIGINALLY (under Christ) to rule and govern the Church, that is, themselves. But who wil so say of a government not personal, but publique, and instituted, as the Churches is?

2. If the Elders in their consistory represent the Church, then whatsoever they either decree, or do agreeing to the word of *God*, whether respecting faith or manners, that also the Church decreeth and doth, though absent, though ignorant both what the thing is, which is done, and upon what grounds it is done by the Elders: this being the nature of representations, that what the representing doth within the bounds of his Commission, tha tthe represented doth primarily, and much more, as but using the other for his instrument. Now how dissonant

nant this is to true faith and pietie, how consonant unto the Papists implicit faith, no man can be ignorant: and I had rather wise men should consider, then I aggravate.

3. The constant, and universall practise of the Apostles and Apostolick Churches do quite crosse this consistorian course. The Apostle Paul, well acquainted with the meaning of *Christ*, doth 1 *Cor.* 5. so reduce into practise, the rule and prescript of his Master, *Matth.* 18. or to use the words of the Bishop of *Chester*, *Their commands to bring into practise this power*, *In the name of Christ*, *with his spirit*, as he seems to leave no place for doubting to him, who with diligence, and without prejudice, will compare together these two places, what the Lord meaneth, when he saith, *Tell the Church*, This our Apostle doth in that place, reprove not the Elders or governors alone, but with them also the whole commonaltie and body, for tollerating the incestuous person amongst them. Which therefore accordingly, as his Authority Apostolicall, and *care for all the Churches* did require, he admonisheth, and directeth, that as mindefull both of the sinners repentance, and salvation, and therewith of their owne puritie, they would exclude, by due order, that wicked man from their holy fellowship. And that by these words (*when you are come together*) the whole Church is to be understood, many, but heavie friends to the peoples libertie, Jesuites, Prelatists, and others

Bish. of Winchest. answer to Tortus; pa. 43.

2 Corin. 11. 28.

others do grant. But we will annex certaine reasons for the further clearing of the thing.

vv. 1, 2, 4, 7, 13. 1. They *among whom the fornicatour was*, who *were puffed up, when they should have sorrowed*, and *out of the middest of whom, he was to be put, who had done that thing*; they were to be *gathered together in one*, and to *judg* and excommunicate that incestuous person. But the fornicator was not amongst the Elders alone, neither were they alone puffed up when they should have sorrowed, neither was that wicked man to be taken out of the midst of them, and still left in the midst of the people: and therefore not to be judged by them alone, but by the Church with them, though governed by them.

ver. 7. 2. It did not of old appertaine onely to the Levites and Elders in Israel, to *purge out* of their houses the materiall *leven*, but to every father of Familie also: so by proportion to the whole Church now, to purge out the leven spirituall there spoken of: which also could not *leven the whole lump*, or Church, in the Apostles meaning, except it had concerned the whole Church to purge it out.

vers. 9 3. The Apostle wrote not to the Elders only, but with them to the whole bodie, *not to be commingled with fornicators, covetous persons*, or the like, *called brethren*: he therefore admonisheth them, as the other, to cast their stone at the incestuous

ceſtuous man, for *the taking him away from the Lords people.* 11.

Many more Arguments, and the ſame very clear, might be drawne to this end, out of the text it ſelfe; but for brevitie ſake I will omit them, and annex this onely one which followeth, from the ſecond chapter of the ſecond Epiſtle. The ſame Apoſtle writing to theſe ſame Corinthians about the ſame inceſtuous perſon, but now penitent, as before delinquent, ſeriouſly exhorts them, that looke what ſeveritie they had formerly ſhewed in cenſuring him for his ſinne, the like compaſſion they would now ſhew, in receiving him againe upon his repentance: therein plainely infinuating, that this buſineſſe was not in the hands of the Elders alone, except we will ſay, that they alone were *made ſad* by the Apoſtles reproofe, that they alone by their *ſtudie, defence, indignation, zeale,* &c. *teſtified,* that they *were pure in the thing,* and except it belonged to them alone to *pardon,* and *comfort* the repentant ſinner, and *to confirme their loue vnto him.* chap. 7. 9, 11, and 2, 7, 8.

And whereas ſome would incloſe this whole power within the Apoſtles circuit, as if he alone Biſhop-like, had paſſed ſentence judiciarie upon the offender, and onely committed the declaration, and publication of it in the Church, to ſome his ſubſtitute, I deem it not loſt labour briefly to ſhew how erroneous this opinion is of externall monarchicall government, yea power

also which is more, in the Church of *Christ*.

And first, one alone, how great soever, cannot suffice to make the Church or congregation which Christ hath furnished with power of *binding*, and *loosing*, Matth. 18, 17, 18. both reason, and Scripture teaching, that for an assembly, and congregation at least *two or three* are required. ver. 19. *The Church* (*which name signifies a multitude, designeng by a new trope, one alone singular person*, as saith D. *Whitakers* against *Stapleton* going about to prove that *the name of the Church belongs to the Pastours, or Bishops, or Pope alone.*)

See the Bishop of Chich. answere to Torrus p. 41, 42.

Whitakers of the authority of the Script. lib. 1.

2. It is expressely affirmed 2 *Cor.* 2, 6. that the incestuous person was *censured by many*: which *many* or more, the Apostle opposeth to himselfe alone, as appeareth by the context; and not to *all*, as some erroneously think.

3. The Apostle plainely, and sharpely reproveth the *Corinthians* for that before his writing they had not voyded that sinfull man, their holy fellowship, and so prevented the report, by which such a crime, and the same unpunished came to his eares. This their power then the man of God doth not seize into his owne hands as forfait by their default in not using it, but vehemently (and as became a faithfull minister) exhorts and admonishes them to use it, as they ought *in the judging, purging out, and taking from among themselves that wicked man*, and so any other *within*, or called *a Brother*, sinning in the like manner.

4. If

4. If the Apostle *Paul* being absent from *Corinth* had excommunicated this sinner, then had he judicially condemned, and judged a man unaccused, unconvicted, and unreproved (at least face to face, and before his judg): then which what more unjust can be imagined of, or ascribed unto the holy Apostle? I conclude therefore with *Peter Martyr*; *The Apostle, as great as he was, doth not so far usurp to himselfe power, as that he one, and alone by himselfe should excommunicate: which yet the Pope, and many Bishops* (both Romish and English) *dare do: In judging he goes before others, as it is meet the chiefe in the Church should do, that so the lesse skilfull multitude might be directed in judging by their voting before them.* See Gal. Sect. of ch. discipl. 3 part Meth. chap. 2. Pet. Mart. in 1 Cor. ch. 5.

Thus much of this place. The next followeth, which is *Acts* 1. When another was to succeed in the room of Judas the traytoor, not *Peter* alone, or the Apostles with him, but (*that the ordination might be just and lawfull, being made with the knowledg of the people assistent, and examined by the verdit, and judgment of all*) *the multitude of the disciples together* did substitute two, whom they deemed most excellent, that of them the Lord, *who knew the hearts of all men*, might take unto himselfe the man, which he knew most fit. That which belonged unto GOD, namely, to designe an Apostle immediately, was left unto him: the disciples also in this work, reteining what might be their libertie: which *Calvin* notes upon this place, to have been a kinde of *middle temper*. Acts 1. Cyprian. l. 1 Epist. 4. ver. 15. Gal. 1, 1. Calvin. in Act. 1.

Act. 6. The third place followeth, which is *Act.* 6. handling the choice of Deacons, and that by the ſame Church in Jeruſalem, not now ſmall, as before, but (which I wiſh may be marked to ſtop the paſſage, which ſome think lyes open for eſcape through ſmaller aſſemblies) now become great, and populous. In this buſineſſe the Apoſtles informe the Church what kind of men they ought to chuſe: the multitude chuſeth whom they judge fit, and meet accordingly; and the ſame preſent to the Apoſtles: upon whom ſo choſen by the people, the ſayd Apoſtles impoſe hands as a ſolemn ſymbole of their conſecration, joyning therewith * common prayer. Now if the Deacons onely be truſted with the Churches money were not to be made, but by the peoples ſuffrage, and election, much leſſe Paſtors and Elders, unto whoſe fidelitie under *Chriſt* the ſame Church doth commit the incomparable treaſure of their ſoules.

* New Book-Prayer.

Act. 14. To the ſame purpoſe (in regard of the matter in hand) ſerveth that, which we read *Act.* 14. 23. where *Paul and Barnabas do ordeyn Elders in everie Church, by ſuffrages* (not their owne as ſome fancie, unto whom *to lift up, and to lay on hands* is all one) but the peoples; or *by the lifting up of hands*, by which ſigne, the *Grecians*, as appeares in *Demoſthenes*, and others, the peoples vote or voyce-giving in their popular aſſemblies was wont to be made. I ad (which is eſpecially to be obſerved) that the Apoſtles in doing their part in the ordination of Elders, did what they

they did, as it were, by the way; staying onely, most like, two or three dayes in a place: so as they could not possibly by their own experience take sufficient knowledg, what persons in the Church were *apt to teach or govern*: who *able to exhort with sound doctrine, and to convince the gainesayers*: how *unblamable* they were, how *watchfull, given to hospitalitie, temperate*, &c. and with these, how mannered wives, and children they had. These things onely the brethren which conversed with them publiquely, and privately, could sufficiently take knowledg, and experience of. Upon their electing them did the ordination conferred by the Apostles, as the hands of the Church, depend. By election the persons elected have right to their offices; into the actuall possession whereof they are solemnly admitted by ordination.

1 Tim. 3. Tit. 1.

This troup of proofes, that known, and notable place *Act.* 25. shall shut up: in which we have the peoples libertie in the Churches both of *Antioch*, and *Jerusalem* plentifully confirmed and commended by Apostolick practise to ensuing Churches, and times.

Act. 25.

And first, it is evident, that in the Church of *Antioch* together with the Elders of which it appeares then it had *Act.* 14. 23. the brethren were admitted into the fellowship of the businesse and disquisition made about circumcision: *Paul and Barnabas* with the rest of the delegates then sent being brought on their voiage by the Church

See Whitak. of the author of H. Script. lib. 3. ch. 5. sect. 1.

ver. 3.

ver. 3. the letters also being written back from *Jerusalem to the brethren which were at Antioch*, ver. 23. and which is specially to be noted, then, and not before, *delivered when the multitude were come together*. verse 30. So in the Church at *Jerusalem* the messengers from *Antioch* were received not onely *of the Apostles and Elders*, but *of the Church* with them, verse 4. And as the question was propounded, so was it discussed before the whole Church by *the Apostles, and Elders comming together to look unto that businesse*. ver. 6. yet not so as the brethren were wholly bound to silence, seeing that ver. 11. *the whole multitude* is sayd to have *held their peace*, that is, to have yeilded to *Peters* speech, and reasons. Lastly, as *Silas and Iudas* were sent with *Paul* and *Barnabas*, by the *Apostles and Elders with the whole Church* unto *Antioch*, vers. 22. so were the letters written back in the name of them all *to the brethren at Antioch*. ver. 23. And although the *decrees* to be observed by the Churches of the Gentiles, (whereof no one, excepting *Antioch*, had any delegates present) which were also part of the word of GOD, and holy Canon, could come from none other then the Apostles, immediately inspired by the holy Ghost, they notwithstanding in the publishing of the same, did not disdaine the consenting suffrag of the brethren of that particular Church of *Jerusalem*, where the assembly was.

See Iohan. wolph. in 2 king. c. 23.

And surely, if it ever did, or could apertaine to any Church officers or governors whatsoever

to

to represent the Church assemblies, in elections, censures, and other Ecclesiasticall judgments, and occurrences; then without doubt unto the Apostles in an eminent, and peculiar manner (especially living in that rude, and childish state of the Church) considering both how superlative their office was, and how admirable their gifts, and endowments of the holy Ghost, together with their incomparable both pietie, and prudence: by which they were both most able, and willing to promote the Christian faith in holynes. And although this constant, and uniform both practise, and institution of the Apostles unto divers politick persons, swelling with pride of fleshly reason, despising Apostolicall simplicitie, and who, as *Irenæus* speaks, would be rectifiers of the *Apostles*, seeme worthy of light regard, yet to us, who beleeve with *Theodoret*, that we *ought to rest in the Apostolicall, and prophetical demonstrations*, and who with *Tertullian* do *adore the fullnesse of the Scriptures*, they seeme of singular weight and moment.

Iren. against Her. lib. 3. *Theodor. dial. 1.* *Tertull. against Hermog.*

And whilst I consider with my selfe in the fear of GOD, how it was the Apostles duetie to *teach the disciples* of Christ *to observe whatsoever he commanded them*; and how the Apostle *Paul* testifieth, that even *the things, which he wrought* touching *order, and comlynes* to be observed in the Church-exercises, were the commandements of the Lord, as also how the same Apostle clearly professeth, that he and his fellow officers were

Math. 28. 20. 1 Cor. 14. 37. eb. 4. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 5.

onely

onely to be *reputed as ministers and ambassadours* of Christ, to whom therefore in the execution of their office it was not permitted to do, or speake the least thing, which they had not in charge from him, it is unto me a matter of great scruple, and conscience, to depart one hair-breadth (extraordinarie accidents ever excepted) from their practise, and institution, in any thing truely ecclesiasticall, though never so small in it selfe: whatsoever, by whomsoever, and with what colour soever is invented, and imposed, touching the government of the Church which is *the house and tabernacle of the living God.* And a partner in this faith I do hope to live, and die, and to appeare before *Jesus Christ*, with bouldnesse in that great and fearefull day of his coming.

1 *Tim.* 3.

I add, that seeing the Christian congregation as the spouse of Christ, free, and ingenuous, hath the Church officers who [illegible]r, as *Christ Jesus* her husbands, so also her *servants for Jesus sake*, whom under Christ she trusteth with her eternall salvation, and unto whom for their labour she oweth wages for reliefe and maintenance; Considering also how much it makes both to whet on the diligence of the ministers, and to inforce the diligence of the people, whilst these on the one side consider with themselves, how they have them set over them, whom above others themselves have liked, and made choyce of; and they on the other side, that they are set over those by whom they before others were made

2 *Cor.* 4, 5, 1 *Tim.* 4, 16, *ch.* 5, 17, 18.

made choyce of, and elected: that which *Cyprian* hath, seemeth most equall, and of institution morall, and unchangeable, that *the commonaltie fearing God and keeping his commandements, should have the speciall hand either in chusing of worthy Priests*, or ministers, *or of reiecting the unworthy: which also*, saith he, *we see to be founded upon divine authority*. *Cypr. Epist. 4. lib. 4. 1.*

The same is to be held of excommunication. Seeing that it behooveth the Christian multitude to avoyd the fellowship of excommunicated not onely in the course of religion, but even in common, and familiar conversation (the rights of nature, familie, and common wealth ever kept inviolated): and that whom yesterday I was to repute a brother neare, and deere in *Christ*, to morrow I must hold *as a Heathen, and Publican*, and as *for the destruction of the flesh, delivered to Sathan*: who is so unequall a judge, as not to think it a most equall thing, that the multitude should clearely, and undoubtedly take knowledge both of the heynousnes of the crime, and incorrigible contumacie of the person, after the use of all meanes, and remedies for reclayming him. This if it be not done, then doth not the Church herein live by her own, but by her officers faith; neither are her governors to be reputed as servants, but Lords unto her; neither do they *exercise their office popularly* in the Church as they ought, but *tyrannically*, as they ought not, by *Chrysostoms* verdit. His words are *Math. 18. 1 Corinth. 5.*

theſe. *He who beares himſelfe upon an externall and worldly power, becauſe he rules legally, and that men muſt of neceſſitie obey him, doth oft times, and that not without cauſe, exerciſe authoritie againſt the will, and wel-liking of his ſubjects; But on the other ſide, he who will be over theſe, who voluntarily ſubmit unto him, and can him thank, and yet will preſume to do things as himſelfe liketh, and as if he were to give account to none other thereof, that man rather exerciſeth his authority tyrannically then popularly.*

Chryſoſt. in Epiſt. to Tit.

The LORD GOD put it into the hearts of thoſe who beare greateſt ſway in the reformed Churches, to indeavour the furniſhing of the ſame with ſuch Elders, as may both fully, and conſtantly, and popularly, diſcharge their place for the peace of their owne conſciences before GOD, the edification of the Churches over which they are ſet, as alſo for the abating, if not aboliſhing, of that contempt in which Prelatiſts, and ſupercilious perſons uſe to hold theſe *lay-Elders*, as they call them.

But now leſt any ſhould take occaſion, either by the things here ſpoken by us, or elſewhere of us, to conceive, that we either exerciſe amongſt our ſelves, or would thruſt upon others, any popular, or democraticall Church-government; may it pleaſe the Chriſtian Reader to make eſtimate of both our judgment, and practiſe in this point, according to theſe three declarations following.

Firſt, we beleeve, that the externall Church-govern-

government under *Christ* the onely mediator, and monarch thereof is plainely aristocraticall, and to be administred by some certaine choice men, although the state, which many unskilfully confound with the government, be after a sort popular, and democraticall. By this it appertaines to the people freely to vote in elections and judgments of the Church in respect of the other we make account, it behooves the *Elders* to *govern* the people even in their voting in just libertie, given by Christ whatsoever. Let the Elders publiquely propound, and order all things in the Church, and so give their sentence on them; let them reprove them that sinne, convince the gain-sayers, comfort the repentant, and so administer all things according to the prescript of Gods word: Let the people of faith give their assent to their *Elders* holy and lawful administration: that so the Ecclesiasticall elections, and censures may be ratified, and put into solemne execution by the Elders, either in the ordination of officers after election, or excommunication of offenders after obstinacie in sinne.

See Bodin of Commonw. book 1 chap. last.

1 *Cor.* 12. 28. 1 *Tim.* 5, 17. *Heb.* 13. 17.

2. We doubt not but that the Elders both lawfully may, and necessarily ought, and that by vertue of their office, to meet a part at times from the bodie of the Church, to celebrate of such things as concerne her welfare, as for the preventing of things unnecessary, so for the preparing (according to just order) of things necessarie, so as publiquely, and before the people, they may be prosecuted with most conveniencie, and least trouble that may be.

3. By the people whose liberte, and righe in voting we thus avow, and stand for; in matters truly publique and Ecclesiasticall, we do not understand (as it hath pleased some contumeliously to upbraid us) women, and children; but onely men, and them grown, and of discretion: making account, that as childrē by their nonage, so women by their sex are debarred of the use of authoritie in the Church.

1 Cor. 14. 34 35.
1 Tim. 2, 12.

To proceed and briefly shew, *what that due power is, by which we would have the Church to be governed, and unto which we would willingly be subiected.* It is that Polity-Ecclesiasticall, which the Lord *Jesus*, the King of his Church, hath ordained in the New Testament; and given unto all the Churches of his Saints, whereby they are to chuse, and call into office, such as are fit, and exercise all other spirituall ordinances, in, and among themselves, immediately from him. This government we hold, to be the perfection of all, as comprehending in it, whatsoever is excellent in all other *bodies politicall*; As man being the perfection of all creatures, comprehends in his nature, what is excellent in them all: Having *being* with the elements; *life* with the plants; *sense* with beasts, and with the Angels reason.

Those which have written, about the Politike government of Common-wealths; as *Aristotle a*, *Herbertus b*, *Tholosanus c*, *Bodin d*, *Iunius e*. *Daneus f*, *Richterus g*, *Alibusius h*, *Contarinus i*, and others doe mention three kindes, as lawfull

a L. 5. Pol. c. 1. & l. 3. c. 11.
b L. 1 Hist.

full and good. *Monarchicall*, *Aristocraticall*, and *Democraticall*. Now all these three formes, (as the learned [x] judiciously observe) have their places in the Church of *Christ*. In respect of him the head, it is a *Monarchy*, in respect of the Eldership, an *Aristocracy*; in respect of the body, a popular state.

Further I doe affirme; that this Ecclesiasticall government, is unchangeable, ordinary, best, and perpetuall; common to all true Churches, and unto which all estates must be subject, as brethren; so every officer likewise: and good reason too, for it is a matter of faith; a point of the Gospel, yea of the substance of it; and necessary to salvation, so farre I meane, as other of Gods ordinances. But not to speake any more of the necessity, and excellency of this *Church Government*, (there being in print many learned Treatises of it) I will here lay downe my reasons to prove the former Assertion; viz. that *every particular visible Church, hath from Christ absolute and intire power, to exercise in, and of herselfe, every ordinance of God; and so is an independent body, not standing under any other Ecclesiasticall authority out of it selfe.* And this I will doe, if God permit.

x Pol. Lib. 4. c. 5. d Lib. 2. c. 7. & Li. 6. c. 74 e Par. 1. qu. Pol. qu. 4. f L. 4 Pol. c. 5. g Dict. axiom. 63. h C. 32. Pol. i Hist. Venet. * D. Whita. cont. 4. q. 1. pag. 14. Refut. D. Down Serm. l. 2. par. 2 p. 106 Pet. Mart. loc. com. Clas. 4. c. 5. pag. 783. Keckerm. System. S. S. Theol. lib. 3. p. 400.

ARGUMENT I.

ARGUMENT I.

If these Churches, planted by the Apostolique institution, had power fully in themselves immediately from Christ, to practise all his ordinances: Then have all Churches the like power now.

But the first is true: Therefore the second.

The proposition is cleare and certaine, by these Scriptures, 1 Cor. 5. 2. 3. Act. 14. 23. 2 Cor. 16 2. Col. 2. 5. 2 Thess. 3. 14.

The assumption is acknowledged by sundry of our best Divines. *That first government of the Church* (saith Mr. Brightman *) *is common to all times, and places; and that it is not to be permitted to be at the arbitriment of men, to follow what way they list, but that alwayes in reforming a Church, we must have recourse unto the first beginnings, to the which, as our onely rule, we must call back whatsoever strayeth from it, and that they are not to be turned and tuned according to the crookednes, and jarring sound of the succeeding Churches.* Mr. Parker * hath in effect the very same speech; so Mr. *Cartwright* *, and B. *Bilson* * likewise. *Hooker* gives a reason for it; namely, because *the first state of things was best, &c. and therefore it must needs follow, that customes, Lawes, and Ordinances, devised since, are not so good for the Church of Christ; but the best way is to cut off later inventions, and to reduce things unto the ancient state, wherein at the first they were.* And this

* On Revel. chap. 2. p. 65. edit. 3.

* Polit. Eccl. l. 1. c. 23. pag. 59. & l. 3. p. 95. & 300.

* Repl. to Whitg. l. 1. pag. 25. 26.

* Perpet. Governm. p. 3. Eccl. Polit. l. 4. p. 148.

this agrees with *Tertullians** saying of old: *That is truest which is first, that is first which is from the beginning; that is from the beginning, which is from the Apostles.*

* *Cont. Marc. l. 4. c. 5.*

ARGUMENT II.

If Christ in Mat 18. 17. *where he saith,* Tell the Church; *doth meane a particular Congregation: Then hath every particular Congregation, an intyre power, in, and of itselfe, to exercise Ecclesiasticall government, and all other Gods spirituall ordinances.*

But the first is true: Therefore the second.

The proposition is cleare, and certaine, maintained by the most judicious Divines; viz. *Vrsinus a, Zwinglius b,* D. *Andrewes c, Chemnitius d, Arcturus e, Pelargius f, Hannius g, Vatablus h, Munster i, Beza, k, Erasmus l,* D. *Whitaker m, Cartwright n,* D. *Fulke o, Parker p,* and others.

The Assumption is proved thus: *That Church which Christ intendeth in* Mat. 18. *hath absolute power in and of it selfe to performe all Gods Ordinances, but Christ intendeth in* Mat. 18. *a particular Congregation therefore every particular Congregation hath absolute power, in and of it selfe, to performe all Gods Ordinances.* Moreover let it be observed, that this Church in *M.* 18. is given as a plat-forme, or example unto all Churches, to walke by. As *Moses* was to make the Arke in every respect proportionable unto the patterne, which he saw in the Mount; even so, &c.

a *Explica. p.* 2 *p.* 534.
b *Explan. Act* 8.
c *Tort. Tort, pag.* 42.
d *In Mat.* 18. 17.
e *Idem.*
f *Idem.*
g *Idem.*
h *Idem.*
i *Idem.*
k *De Eccl. l.* 1. *ca.* 13.
l *Paraph. in Mat.* 18.
m *De Rom. Pont. cont.* 4. *q.* 1 *p.* 86.
n *Confut. Rhem. in Mat.* 8.
o *Idem.*
p *Polit. Eccl. l.* 3. *pag.* 79.

ARGU-

ARGUMENT III.

Whatsoever was commanded to the 7 Churches to be practised by each of them, apart, in and for themselves, that no Church of God must now omit.

But Ecclesiasticall government, was commanded to the 7 Churches to be practised by each of them, apart, in, and for themselves.

Therefore no Churches of God must omit the practise of Ecclesiasticall government, apart in and for themselves.

The proposition cannot be doubted of. For as *Chytræus a*, *Artopeus b*, *Bullinger c*, *Brightman d*, and others write, All Churches from these, ought to learne, what government to exercise, what Doctrines to teach; what persons to excommunicate; who to receive, and to comfort, and the like.

The assumption is proved clearely in chap. 2. ver. 2. 14. 20. &c. Moreover Mr. *Perkins* (speaking of those Churches) sayth: *God gave to every of them, power and authority to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, represse evill men, decern false Prophets, and to exclude all obstinate sinners from all spirituall priviledges among them.*

a In Rev. c. 1. p. 29. 34.
b In cap. 1. p. 11.
c In Rev. 2. Hom. 8.
d In Reve. 1. 2. & 3. ch.
* Expos. upon ch. 2. v. 20. & ch. 3. v. 7.
a Cont. 9. Cent. 1.
b Answ. to the Rhem. 1 Cor. 5. 4.
c In præcep. 4. c. 19. p. 688
d De Regn. Chr. l. 1. c. 9.

ARGUMENT IV.

If the Church of Corinth had power and authority within

within her selfe; to exercise Ecclesiasticall government; Yea and did it, I meane the Ministerie, and the rest of the Church there: Then ought not particular Congregations now, to stand under any other Ecclesiasticall authority out of themselves.

But the first is true: Therefore the second.

The first part is unquestionably certaine; and of this judgement was D. *Willet a*, D. *Fulke b*, *Zanchy c*, *Bucer d*, *Piscator e*, D. *Andrewes f*, *Pet. Martyr g*, *Polanus h*, D. *Feild i*, *Paræus k*, *Zwinglius l*, and others.

Againe whereas the Papists, and Hierachy do say (much after the Presbyteriall doctrine) that the Church of *Corinth* had not sole and alone authority, in it selfe, to exercise Ecclesiasticall government; our writers, viz. Mr. *Cartwright* *, Mr. *Parker* *, and others, doe soundly refute them, and prove the contrary by many reasons.

The latter part is proved before, in the *Minors*, of the 1, and 3 arguments.

a In 1 Cor. 5. 4. Obser. 1.
b Tort. Part. pag. 42.
c 1 Cor. 5.
d Synt. Theo. l. 7. c. 19.
e Of the Church l. 1. c. 5.
f In 1. Cor. 5. de Eccom. l. Epichir. de Can. Misse, & ad Valent. comp
* Refutat. Rhem. 1 Cor. 5. 4.
* Pol. Eccl. l. 3. & 4. p. 17. 18. &c.

ARGUMENT V.

Such actions the Church may lawfully do, wherein no Law of God is broken.

But there is no Law of God broken, when particular Congregations doe, in, and among themselves exercise all Gods ordinances.

Therefore they may lawfully do it.

The proofe of the proposition, doth arise

from the definition of sinne; which as *Augustine* a, and *Ambrose* b, truely define it, *is either a deed or word, or thought, against some Divine Law. Lombard* c, *Aquinas* d, and other Schoolemen (as they are called) agree hereto.

a Cont. Faust. 22. c. 27.
b Lib. de Paradis c. 8.
c Lib. 2 & 35.
d Th. 12. qu. 71.

The assumption is manifested in our first Argument, the first part of it.

ARGUMENT VI.

If the Apostle gave commandement unto the Eldership of Ephesus, for the whole administration of all ordinances in that Church: Then may the Eldership of every particular Congregation, administer among themselves all Gods ordinances.

But the first is true, therefore the second.

The *Major* is proved two wayes. 1. By Scripture *Act.* 28. ver. 17 28. 2. By the testimony of the learned *Whitaker* *.

The *Minor* is undeniable: for as Mr. *Brightman* * sayth, *there was one forme of government in all Churches, namely, that that is delivered us in the acts of the Apostles, and the rest of the writings.* There are extant at this present divers Treatises *, to prove that *Christ* hath instituted but one onely *forme of Church government*, common to all Churches, ordinary, perpetuall, and best.

* Rom. Pont. Cont. 4. qu. 1. c. 1. p. 12. Cont. 2. qu. 5. c. 6. pag. 281. 284.
* On the Apoc. ch. 12. p. 505.
* See Park. Pol. Eccl. l. 2. c. 40. p. 324. 325. &c. Defen. of godly

Thus we have prooved the affirmative part of our assertion, to wit, that *every particular Congregation, hath power in, and for it selfe, immediatelie*

from

from Christ, to exercise Ecclesiasticall Government and all other Religious ordinances; we will now speake a little of the other part; that is, prove that *particular Congregations do not stand under any other Ecclesiasticall authority, out of themselves*, viz. *Presbyters and Synods*. *Min. against Bridg. stiamd. p. 133. 134. &c.*

ARGUMENT VII.

Such Offices and callings, without which the Church of God is compleat, and perfect, for Government, are superfluous and humane.

But the Church of God may be compleate, and perfect, for Government, without Presbyterial & Synodicall Offices and callings.

Therefore these Offices and callings, are superfluous and humane.

This argument the Protestants have used against the Pope; and the Reformists against Bish. A.B. Chancellours, &c. Now the same is every-way as firme and good, against Synods and Presbyteries, for without them, the Church of God, is fully brought to compleate perfection and unity. D. *Fulke** confidently affirmeth so much. That which D. *Whitaker** writes of generall Councells, is by Mr. *Parker** applyed, (and rightly) unto particular Synods. *The Church of God* (sayth he) *can well subsist without them, for she was sometimes without them: besides we are not bound by any speciall commandement of God to have them.*

* *Learn. Disc. Eccl. Gouv. p. 10. 11.*
* *De Conc. qu. 1 p. 22. 23.*
* *Polit. Eccl. l. 3. p. 133.*

ARGUMENT VIII.

Whatsoever Government cannot be found commanded in the written word of God; *ought not to have any place in the Church of* God.

But the Government of Presbyters and Synods, over many particular congregations, cannot be found commanded in the written word of God.

Therefore it ought not to have any place in the house of God.

The first part is grounded upon these Scriptures, *Esa.* 8. 20. *Mat.* 28. *ult.* 1 *Thess.* 5. 21. *Gal.* 5. 1. 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. Likewise this is the judgement of many learned men. *Athanasius* * sayth, *The Ecclesiasticall canons, come from the Apostles. Cyprian* * sayth, *From the Scriptures doe spring, and thither do returne, whatsoever the Ecclesiasticall Discipline doth require. Julius* * sayth, *Not shew of eloquence, but Apostolicall Canons are required.* Mr. *Cartwright* * sayth, *Nothing should be placed in the Church, but what God in his word hath commanded.* The like *Theodoret* a, *Ambrose* b, *Ignatius* c, *Augustine* d, *Cyrill* e, and others.

* *Epist. in præ. ad Orthod.*
* *Diaco. &c. quæ Athan. Apo. 2. inscribitur.*
* *Repl. to D. Whitg. l. 1. p. 25.*
a 1 *Cor.* 11.
b In 1 *Co.* 7.
c *Epist.* 2. *ad Smyrn.*
d *Epist.* 119.
e In *Iob* 1.

The second part is also as manifest; for if we once grant (as all Learned have granted) that the Churches of the Apostolique constitution, were independent bodies, and exercised Ecclesiasticall government, in and of themselves; then it must follow, that Presbyteriall Assemblies,

blies, &c. have their *rise* wholly, from the pleasure and will of man.

ARGUMENT IX.

That government which meerely tendeth unto the taking away, from particular Congregations, their due power is unlawfull.

But the government of Presbyters and Synods (as they now are) doth meerely tend unto the taking away from particular Congregations their due power.

Therefore that Government is unlawfull.

The Major of this argument may easily be proved by sundry places of Scriptures; viz. 1 *Thess.* 4. 6. 3 *John* 9. *Prov.* 22. 28. *Deut.* 19. 14. *Gal.* 5. 1. Also it is grounded upon the definition of *justice*; which is, as *Tully* [a], *Justinian* [b], and others say, *to give every one his owne*. And so much imports the word according to the Etymologie, or precise signification of it; both in Greeke [c], and Latine [d].

a *L. 3. Offic.*
b *Instit. l. 1. tit. 1. p. 2.*
c *Δικαιος*
d *Νικα, Arist. l. 5. Ethic. c. 7.*
d *Ius a jure. Fungor Ety. Trilmg. p.* 4050.

The Minor is as manifest: (for as Mr. *Barlow* * sayth,) *No man under the degree of a Prophet, or an Apostle, may prescribe Gods Church and children patenes*:) so by it, is the whole power of Churches (in a manner) taken quite away. For instance; say the Presbyters and Synods, will not permit, that a Congregation shall reject some convicted Hereticks; then they must (if they will beleeve the Presbyters) let them alone in their com-

* *Expos. on 2 Ton. 1. v. 13. doct. 6. pag.* 357.

communion, against Gods expresse commandement; and so obey men rather then God. Againe put case, some Churches doe want Ministers, yet notwithstanding, if the Presbyters and Synods will not give them leave, to chuse any, except unfit and insufficient persons; then it seemes by this *Synodall* Canon, they must take such, or remaine destitute still.

Tit 3 10.

ARGUMENT X.

It is a sinne against God, to add anything, to that forme and manner of ordering Churches, which Christ our heavenly Prophet hath set forth unto us in the New Testament.

To subject particular Congregations, under any other Ecclesiasticall authority, out of themselves, is to add unto that forme and manner of ordering Churches, which &c.

Therefore it is a sinne to do it.

a L. 30. c. 18. cont. Faust.
b Moral. c. 14.
c In Agg. c. 1.
d In Levit. l. 9.
e In 1 Pet. 5.
f In Prov. 30. 6.
g Again. Hill. pag 15.
h In Exod. 35 pag. 168.
i In Prove. 30. 6.
k Vpon Col. 2.

The proposition cannot be excepted against; for the Scriptures herein are evident, Deut. 4. 2 Iosh. 1. 7. Prove. 30. 6. Gal. 3. 15. Rev. 22, 18, 19. If it be a capitall crime, to adulterate the Kings coyne: How much more, &c. And of this judgement are many learned men; viz. *Augustine a*, *Basil b*, *Chrysostome c*, *Cyrill d*, *Beda e*, *Cope f*, D. *Abbots g*, *Brentius h*, Mr. *Cartwright i*, *Melanthon k*, *Elton*, and others.

The Assumption cannot for shame be denyed; onely

onely because the weight of the controversie leaneth upon it, I will speake further of it, in the next Section.

There are yet other reasons to prove our Assertion; the which I will here lay downe more briefly.

1. If every Eldership have alike and equall power, as *Hieroma*, *Cyprian b*, *Bucer c*, and others affirme; then may not the Officers of one Congregation, seeke by authority to suppresse the acts and decrees concluded in another.

2. It is against sense, that a Minister should undertake the care of more Churches then one onely: who reades in Scripture of *a Steward* over many families, a shepheard over divers Flocks, &c. *Nature hath ordained* (saith *Aristotle**) *one unto one.*

3. Is it a like thing, that the Presbyteriall power should be of Gods approving; and yet he never mention it in his word? This argument the Hierarchy * use against Popish Offices; and the Reformists * against theirs. Now let the discreet Reader judge, if it prove not the point in hand as well. Here I may not omit *Zwinglius** speech, speaking of Synods: *we willingly beleeve* (saith he) *that you are a representative Church; for a true Church you are not. But I pray you shew us, whence you fetch this name? who hath given you this name who hath given you power to make Canons, impose things on mens shoulders, grieve their consciences, &c.* And a little after he sayth:

23. p. 381.
a Ep. ad Ena.
b L. de unit. Eccles.
c De Reg. Chr. l. 1. c. 15

* Lib. 1. c. 2.

* Iew. Defe. Apol. 2. par. c. 3. divis. 5.
* D. Laten. Syons Plea. p. 9
* Zwingl Art. 8. expl.

sayth: *Of this representative church, I find nothing in the holy Scriptures, out of mens devices any may faigne what they list; wereft in the holy Scripture, against which thou maist not attempt any thing, if thou be a Christian.*

4. Whosoever shall deny our aforesayd assertion, must of necessity hold two distinct formes of Church government to be lawfull; one where particular Congregations doe in, and of themselves, exercise all Gods ordinances; the other where they stand under another Ecclesiasticall authority out of themselves. Now to hold this, is directly all one, as to hold two wayes to heaven; distinct and opposit in themselves, which is very scandalous in religion, and that which cannot stand with truth.

5. Let it be observed, that for this reason (among others) the Learned* say, the Pope is Antichrist; viz. because he will have men to appeale from their owne Churches unto him; and to stand unto his sentence and decree. And do not the Presbyteriall Assemblies and Synods, take upon them, an authority much like to it, in subjecting many Congregations to them, requiring appeales to be made to them, and that the Judicatory (as their* phrase is) belongeth to them; as if their power were above all Churches.

* *D. White. cont 4. qu. 4. Chamier. l. 6. conject. 2.*

* *In his Letter given into the Consistory.*

6. What more meet, and reasonable, then that every mans case be there heard, and determined, where the fault was committed; so sayth *Cyprian**,

Cyprian *, It is not fit that they, over whom the holy Ghost hath made us overseers, should go to and fro. Nor speaketh of carrying matters away from their owne Church, unto others *.

7. Note, the effect, if it should be otherwise, which is, that every particular Congregation must hence necessarily loose her owne proper right in government, and so of a Mistris become a Servant: in stead of being superiour, wilfully vassall and enslave her selfe, which thing is contrary to Gods will, revealed in his word *.

8. Seeing the Apostles, whersoever they constituted any Church, with doctrine, immediately established in it, Ecclesiasticall government *; for without this, (as D. *Ames* * sayth) *there could have beene no counting of the parts and members together.* It must needs follow, that the primitive Churches were *independant bodies, and stood not under any other Ecclesiasticall authority out of themselves.* Now how the Presbyters will be able to prove a change of this government, I do not yet see: especially, considering that the Learned (as I shewed before *) doe hold, that there is but *one certaine, necessary, and perpetuall forme, and manner of ordering Churches.* And this also is the judgement of *Calvin a*, *P. Martyr b*, D. *Bilson c*, yea the Confession of the Churches of *Fraunce d*, of the *Low Countries e*, and *Scotland f*, in a word, to this the Papists g assent.

9. By the titles given to all particular Congregations, it appeares evidently; that Ecclesiasticall

* Cypr. lib. 1. Epist. 3.
* See pag. 35. 36.
* Gal. 5. 1. 1 Co. 7. 23. 2. Ti. 1. 13. Heb. 4. 14. Revel. 2. 25.
* Park. Pol. Eccl. l. 1. c. 20.
* De consc. l. 4. c. 24. pag. 214.
* Pag. 32.
a Cal. in Sad.
b In Rom. 3. 21.
c Perp. Gov. 338. &c.
d Harm. conf. art. 29.
e Harm. art. 30.
f Treat. of the Discipl. of that Church.
g Sander. visib. Mon. l. 1. c. 6.

[illegible] authority is (or at least ought to be) [illegible] one of them, distinctly, wholly, [illegible] viz. a *Kingdome* h, a *Family* i, a *Body* k, a *Quaere* l, &c. For what more sancelesse, then to say, a Kingdome, or family, standing under another Politicall, or Oeconomicall government out of themselves; a body having all parts and members, and yet may neither receive in, [illegible] without anothers leave and consent; many such absurdities * followeth their devised Tenets.

h Mat. 3. 6.
i Eph. 2, 19.
k 1. Cor. 12. 20.
l Psal. 45.
* See Park. Pol. Eccl. 3. p. 23. & 321, 322. Iun. Eccl. l. 1. c. 4.
D. Whitak. cont. 4. Qu. 1. p. 78.

10. The acts of the Apostolique Churches prove directly our assertion: For it is without all contradiction, that they elected their owne Ministers, excommunicated offenders, sent messengers, and performed all other *Church matters*, among themselves.

Lastly, let it be observed, that the Presbyters in this, accord with the Papists *, and Hierarchy *; for they say (as they do) that *particular Churches are not independent bodies, but stand under another Ecclesiastical authority out of themselves.* The which thing our writers deny, and prove the contrary.

* Bellar. de Eccl. l. 5. c. 5.
* D. Downa. D. Bridges, and others.

By this time I suppose the indifferent Reader perceiveth, that the Scriptures, are every way for us, and against the Presbyteriall government in this controversie betwixt us. Now they should do well, seeing we dispute about a matter of *faith* appertaining to life and salvation, to rest in them, as the onely touching for triall of al truth.

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